

Outlook

42. Human development remains at the core of our planning and on-going economic reforms. If the people are educated, skilled and more healthy, they can contribute more to economic development as well as benefit from it. Sustained efforts are necessary not only to improve the quality of services but also to reduce inter-regional and inter-sectoral disparities in human development. Along-with augmenting public efforts by increasing utilisation of Panchayati Raj initiative in local planning, monitoring and making use of available local and community resources, it is necessary to create an enabling environment for more private sector support and participation by the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in health care and education. The feasibility of rationalising user charges in the field of health, higher education, sanitation, water supply and other services for the people above poverty line on the basis of actual supply costs or at least actual operational costs needs to be pursued.

43. Employment generation and anti-poverty programmes have proliferated over the years. Each scheme is well intentioned but their

multiplicity has led to needless duplication, high overhead costs, confusion at field levels and insufficient benefits to the people. Sustained efforts are necessary to unify these programmes under broad categories of Self Employment Schemes and Wage Employment Schemes for better management, evaluation and monitoring. Available resources need to be better targeted and effective safety nets designed for protection of weaker and vulnerable sections of the society who might be adversely affected in the process of economic development.

44. We need to reformulate an anti-poverty strategy that is fiscally sustainable and more finely targeted to those who truly cannot benefit from the opportunities offered by growth and economic reforms. Safety nets may focus on those who either cannot participate in the growth process (such as for reasons of extreme deprivation or vulnerability combined with poverty) or face continuing exposure to risks uncertainties of economic forces. Effective safety nets that insure rural poor against the income fluctuations, such as public works programmes need to be strengthened.